

Lecture 23 : Kant Part 2

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1 A Copernican Revolution

1.1 Why Copernican?

- Perhaps better to say *reverse Copernican* revolution.
- Copernicus: sun doesn't revolve around the earth, the earth revolves around the sun. We are not the center.
- Kant: our ideas of reality are not passively received, we are the ones who shape those ideas. We are the center.

1.2 Upshot

- Our analysis will not be overly concerned with the true nature of things. We acknowledge things-in-themselves but acknowledge that there's not much we can know about this.
- Transcendental idealism: our ideas are the only things in the *sensible* universe.

2 Matrix of Judgements

	a priori	a posteriori
analytic (<i>clarify</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitional truth • e.g. All bachelors are unmarried 	Empty
synthetic (<i>amplify</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importantly (controversially) non-empty • e.g. $7 + 5 = 12$ (math) • e.g. Conservation of mass (science) • e.g. Every event has a cause (metaphysics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned from experience • e.g. Some bachelors are butchers

3 Transcendental Aesthetic

3.1 Definitions

- **Aesthetic:** The study of how objects are presented in the mind, specifically through the forms of *space* and *time*.
- **Appearance:**
- **Intuition:** That which immediately relates an item of knowledge to its object: “our ability to be knowingly confronted with individual things.”
- **Transcendental:** Opposed to empirical, i.e. not based in experience or that which transcends the sensible world.
- **Sensation:** The effect of an object on our capacity for representation.

- **Empirical Intuition:** “An intuition that is related to its object through sensation”
- **Pure Intuition:** Opposed to empirical intuition, what is left when you strip away all external (sensible) and internal (intellectual) properties. For example, with objects, we are left with extension and shape.
- **Matter of appearance:** “The element in an appearance that corresponds to sensation.”
- **Form of appearance:** That element in appearance “which allows the manifold of appearance to have a certain ordered and interrelated pattern.”

3.2 Kant’s Theory

- Form of appearance is a priori. The proof:
 - (1) **The form** “which is required for the sensations to be ordered and patterned” cannot itself be another sensation, i.e. one sensation cannot make another ordered/patterned.
 - (2) So the form of appearance “isn’t a product of the matter” of the appearance.
 - (3) So the form “must be in the mind *a priori*, ready and willing for sensations to come and be shaped up by it.”
 - (4) Thus, the form of appearance “can be considered separately from all sensation
- This means that *we must consider a priori concepts within the mind separately from empirical knowledge*. We can say that pure intuition is necessary, and accordingly, it makes sense to analyze it.
- *Important distinction:* synthetic a priori truths are about the **sensible universe**. Our experience, e.g. the number of spatial dimensions we perceive, is shaped by our mind and we can conclude synthetic truths *about our minds*. These do not necessarily extend or correspond to things-in-themselves or the “true nature of reality.” However, synthetic a priori truths must still be universal, i.e. *must be the same for all humans*. As an upshot, we have better knowledge of space and time than say, color because they are less subjective, or more clearly, because they reduce to some objective basis.
- In particular, **space** and **time** are a priori for human perception. They are necessary conditions for human experience. This means:
 - Neither space nor time is an object. Both concepts must exist in the mind prior to perceiving of objects. Similarly, neither space nor time is a relational quality of objects because we can imagine space and time devoid of objects.
 - Neither space nor time is (at least necessarily) transcendentally real. They are only necessary for **sensation**, they may not exist in a real (noumenal) sense.
- **Space** is essential to external sensation: bodies require it, but it is not necessary to cohere internal cognition.
- **Time** is essential to internal sensation: we cannot have cognition without the development of thoughts, which requires the concept of time to allow for a state and its opposite to both exist (at different *times*) without arriving at a contradiction.

4 Extraneous Discussion

4.1 Why isn't math analytic?

- Kant: mathematical truths like the Pythagorean theorem are necessarily and universally true (a priori) but their truth is not contained within the definition (synthetic).
- But how are provable mathematical statements not contained in the axioms used to prove them?
- Making the numbers bigger doesn't make it clearer that it's not analytic: just because we have to think about it for some time or apply some number of rules doesn't necessarily make it synthetic. If it did, that definition wouldn't be uniform over humans, which is no good for Kant.

4.2 Why isn't mass a priori?

- It's a property of objects, i.e. it is bound to the idea of the existence of a particular object.
- If we don't posit objects, it is impossible to imagine mass or a massive body.
- Consider the potential counterexample: we can imagine vacuum (space without mass) prior to sensation of bodies. This does not show that mass is a priori since the positive quantity of mass can only be cohered with the existence of bodies. Aside: I can imagine a room without any bunnies, but this notion itself doesn't make sense unless I first posit an object that is/has a bunny. Now replace bunny with mass.